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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 001417

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TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM BM CH JA

SUBJECT: JAPAN-BURMA: FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER DELIVERS LETTER FROM PM KOIZUMI TO REGIME

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor Carol T. Reynolds.
Reasons:1.4(b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a letter to regime leader Than Shwe, PM Koizumi urged the regime to:

-- begin a dialogue with the international community,
-- re-open a dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi
-- release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi.

In delivering the letter, former Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura urged the acceptance of a visit by Malaysia's Foreign Minister as ASEAN's representative and pressed hard on the need to take steps toward democracy. End Summary.

¶2. (C) MOFA Asian Affairs Bureau First Southeast Asia Division Director Hideaki Mizukoshi provided a readout March 16 on former FM Machimura's March 14 visit to Rangoon and his meeting with Burma's FM Nyan Win. Mizukoshi, who accompanied the former Foreign Minister, informed Embassy Tokyo Political Officer that Machimura took advantage of a visit to Singapore to accept a long-standing invitation from Burma's Foreign Minister to visit Rangoon. In Burma, Machimura used his one and one-half hour meeting with FM Nyan Win to deliver a letter from PM Koizumi to regime leader Than Shwe. The letter made three requests of the regime: 1) begin a dialogue with the international community, including the acceptance of the new UN Special Envoy when that person is appointed; 2) re-open a dialogue with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi; and 3) release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi.

¶3. (C) In presenting the letter, Machimura strongly urged Burma to act on the three requests and also requested that Burma accept a visit by Malaysian Foreign Minister Hamid as the representative of ASEAN, Mizukoshi explained. Machimura told Nyan Win that during his meeting with Singapore's Foreign Minister just prior to arriving in Rangoon, FM Yeo had discussed with him the serious concerns of the ASEAN people regarding Burma. Machimura asked Nyan Win to take these concerns into account.

¶4. (C) In response to Machimura's points, Nyan Win stated that Burma would readily accept the new UN Special Envoy if that person had "good intentions" toward Burma. Machimura pressed back, stating that it was important for Burma to accept the UN Special Envoy no matter what that person's intentions toward Burma might be. FM Nyan Win told Machimura that Burma was working toward accepting the visit of Malaysia's Foreign Minister in March. However, Mizukoshi

noted, the visit may be further delayed if no agreement is reached on FM Hamid's request to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi.

¶15. (C) Machimura told Nyan Win that Burma's democratization process was taking too long, Mizukoshi continued. In reply, Nyan Win claimed that Burma had completed roughly three-quarters of its work on the National Convention process. However, because Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD were "out to destroy" the Burmese state, they could never be accepted by the regime. Machimura again rebutted Nyan Win's arguments by pointing out that Japan had many parties that completely disagreed with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party; nonetheless, the LDP engages with them in the Diet. Democracy requires the free exchange of views, Machimura stressed.

¶16. (C) The Machimura visit was one of the few occasions in which a Japanese leader had an opportunity to engage in an in-depth discussion on democracy with a senior representative of the regime, Mizukoshi observed. FM Nyan Win undertook to deliver PM Koizumi's letter to Than Shwe, as well as to report on their discussion.

¶17. (C) Japan is interested in coordinating its message to Burma with the United States and ASEAN, Mizukoshi stated. Japan had recently discussed its views on Burma with Indonesia and Malaysia and would try to ensure that FM Hamid had a clear understanding of Japanese views prior to his proposed visit. Noting Japan's concerns about China's policy toward Burma, Mizukoshi stated that China's growing ties to Burma may undercut U.S. and Japanese efforts to press for democracy. Japan intends to maintain its channel of communication with the Burmese regime, he said, otherwise Burma's only contact in the international community would be China. At the same time, Mizukoshi asserted, Japan would

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continue pressing the regime for democratic change.
SCHIEFFER